Pakistani pledge to cooperate US Forces

276. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press reports that the Musharraf Government has told the US military not to enter its territory without permission;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that Pakistan has pledged continuing cooperation with American forces in fighting global terrorism and also in the effort to apprehend fleeing Al-Qaida and Taliban fugitives in Eastern Afghanistan; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (c) Government have seen reports of statements by Pakistani officials indicating that Pakistan had asked the US military not to enter its territory without permission in pursuit of Al-Qaida and Taliban fugitives fleeing from Eastern and Southern Afghanistan.

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US. Pakistan has extended limited and reluctant cooperation to the American forces in apprehending some of the Al-Qaida and Taliban fugitives fleeing from Eastern and Southern Afghanistan.

It is widely understood by the international community that following the demise of Taliban in Afghanistan, Pakistan has become the epicentre of terrorism today. While Pakistan has extended some limited and reluctant cooperation in the operations against terrorists entering its territory from its western borders, it has continued its policy of supporting and providing safe heaven to international terrorism and using terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy against India This duplicitous policy of Pakistan has been widely recognised and many governments have asked Pakistan to stop the sponsorship of cross-border terrorism and dismantle the infrastructure of and support to terrorism in that country.

Indian policy towards Gulf War

277. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Government's policy with regard to Iraq keeping in view the threat of war looming large on Iraq;

(b) whether Government are to change their earlier policy; which was prevalent during the last gulf war; and

(c) whether America has also discussed with India in this regard while atmosphere is being created by America against Iraq?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) India is vitally interested in the peace and prosperity of the Gulf region and has therefore consistently called for the resolution of the crisis relating to Iraq through political and diplomatic means under the auspices of the UN. India recognises the validity of the unanimous decision of the United Nations Security Council in its Resolution 1441 which provides for the disarmament of Iraq. Iraq has to faithfully comply with the provisions of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. The work of the inspectors is continuing in Iraq, and UNMOVIC and IAEA have submitted two reports to the Security Council on 27 January and 14 Februrary. The Security Council should decide on what further action needs to be taken. All concerned should decide on what further action needs to be taken.

(b) Government's decisions will be based on consideration of all relevant factors in the evolving situation with regard to Iraq, within the framework of India's national interests and the well-established principles of its foreign policy.

(c) The United States has conveyed to the Government during various bilateral interactions its position on the Iraq issue and the political and diplomatic measures it has initiated in support of its position.India has conveyed its position as outlined in (a) above to the United States.

Government's role during US-Iraq war

278. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the role Government are willing to play in the recent chain of event following the UN weapons inspection in Iraq;

(b) whether Government are willing to support the Americans or the Iraqis;